Phonics Fun Chapter Books EDUCATOR GUIDE







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Introduction

This educator guide is designed to help teachers implement the Phonics Fun Chapter Books collection into their literacy curriculum. Family members can also use this educator guide when students are reading this collection at home. This guide includes the following features:

- A Scope and Sequence organized by the three series of chapter books (Camp Whispering Woods, Mystery Masters, and Tails and Tales)
- A book-by-book table for each title in the collection that includes a specific social and emotional learning (SEL) activity, discussion question, and writing activity tied to the book's plot and themes
- Extra small-group activities that can be completed in various home or school settings
- Extra phonics activities that are tied to the phonics focuses in each series

While the activities for each book are tailored to align with a specific theme and phonics focus, we encourage instructors to consider the needs of individual readers and adjust the activities accordingly.

Activity Menu

SEL Activities: An SEL activity for each book is included in this guide. These activities are intended to be completed at the beginning of a lesson. Starting with an opportunity for selfreflection, meditation, or silence in a peaceful environment allows readers to refocus and center themselves.

Discussion Questions: In addition to the discussion questions listed throughout each book, an extra group discussion question for each title is included in this guide. These questions encourage critical thinking, build understanding, and create connections among group members. When prompting conversations about these questions, encourage readers to openly share their thoughts and feelings with the group. When possible, have readers identify specific events in the book that connect to the conversation.

Writing Activities: This guide includes a writing activity for each title. These activities encourage readers to connect to the characters, plot, or themes from the book and also express their own thoughts, opinions, and feelings. Encourage writers to practice the phonics skills they are learning in their writing.

Extra Small-Group Activities: These smallgroup reading activities are opportunities for readers to continue building their fluency. Many activities are designed to be completed in small groups at school, while others can be completed at home.

Extra Phonics Activities: In addition to the phonics activities found at the end of each book, this guide offers engaging, hands-on exercises intended to help students grasp fundamental phonics concepts. This section features one activity for each phonics focus.

Scope and Sequence

Camp Whispering Woods	Phonics Focus
Restless Fossil	Closed Syllables/Complex Closed Syllables
Message in the Dirt	Vowel-r Syllables
The Clockwork Curse	Complex Consonant Patterns
The Haunting of Cabin 13	Compound Words
The Book of Riddles	Long Vowels
Haunted Deliveries	Vowel Team Syllables
The Piano Ghost	Multisyllabic Words
Who's Haunting Who?	Prefixes/Roots/Suffixes

Mystery Masters	Phonics Focus
The Mysterious Mr. Platt	Closed Syllables/Complex Closed Syllables
Operation Robot Rescue	Vowel-r Syllables
School Play Sabotage	Complex Consonant Patterns
The Secret Scroll	Multisyllabic Words
The Thief in Room 103	Long Vowels
Museum Mayhem	Vowel Team Syllables
The Mysterious Moonlight Fair	Compound Words
The Alien Escape Room	Prefixes/Roots/Suffixes

Tails and Tales	Phonics Focus
Trouble at Hillside Hive	Compound Words
Skunk Squad	Vowel-r Syllables
Shadow's Quest	Multisyllabic Words
The Unlikely Leader	Closed Syllables/Complex Closed Syllables
Frenemies Save the Library!	Prefixes/Roots/Suffixes
Undercover Iguana	Vowel Team Syllables
Briggs vs. the Squirrels	Complex Consonant Patterns
The Golden Box	Long Vowels

Title: Restless Fossil		
Phonics Focus: Closed	Syllables/Complex Closed Syllables	
SEL Activity	Have students find a distraction-free, comfortable spot in the room. Offer flexible seating options, if available. Turn off the lights and play or read a guided meditation or breathing activity. On a screen, project a peaceful scene that ties to the book such as a forest, lake, gurgling creek, or campfire, if possible.	
Discussion Question	A legend is a story that has been told for many years but cannot be proven to be true. Do you believe the legend about the fossils is true or untrue? Why?	
Writing Activity	How would you have reacted if you saw the ghost wolf? What would you have done? Write about your thoughts and actions.	
Title: Message in the Dirt		
Phonics Focus: Vowel-r Syllables		
	Ask thoughtful questions aloud and allow students a variety of options for responding silently, such as whispering into their palms, journaling their answers, or thinking of their answers.	

is, or uninking c **Question suggestions: SEL Activity** • What types of stories do you like to listen to?

	 When you have a problem that feels difficult to solve, what do you do? Who would you go to for help if you had a problem to solve? Why would you choose that person?
Discussion Question	The Campfire Crew's meetings usually consist of telling ghost stories around the bonfire. What would you like to do at a Campfire Crew meeting?
Writing Activity	The campers work together to try to understand the clues and help the ghost. Write about a time you worked together with a group to solve a problem.

Title: The Clockwork Curse	
Phonics Focus: Complex Consonant Patterns	
SEL Activity	Offer quiet, free-choice time for ten minutes. Allow students to choose a calm activity such as drawing, journaling, or organizing their desks. Play calming music and dim the lights to create a peaceful environment.
Discussion Question	At the beginning of the book, Gretchen faced many changes, including her cabin number, counselor, and the way Mackenzie was treating her. How do you feel when you experience an unexpected change? What do you think is the best way to respond to these changes?
Writing Activity	Write about a time you made a new friend. Explain where you met this friend and what you both had in common.

Title: The Haunting of Cabin 13	
Phonics Focus: Compound Words	
SEL Activity	Have students name the emotion they are bringing to class that day, and then have them draw or journal about it. Display an emotions chart for students who need guidance with recognizing or naming their emotions.
Discussion Question	Do you think visiting Cabin 13 was a good or bad idea for the campers? If you were at the camp, would you have joined the group to visit Cabin 13? Why or why not?
Writing Activity	Do you believe in ghosts? Explain why or why not using examples from the book and your ideas about ghosts.

Title: The Book of Riddles	
Phonics Focus: Long Vowels	
SEL Activity	Have students think about what they are thankful for and create a gratitude list. Students might include important people in their lives, their health, or their home. Or they might think about their favorite toy, food, or game.
Discussion Question	The campers found the book underneath a rock on their hike. Gage, Elu, and Teo wanted to keep the book to read it, but Nori and Violet felt uncomfortable having the book. What would you have done in this situation? Why? How would you have felt?
Writing Activity	Write your own riddle and see if a friend or classmate can solve it.

Title: Haunted Deliveries	
Phonics Focus: Vowel Team Syllables	
SEL Activity	Have students write or draw their "peaks and pits" from the week in a journal. Peaks are moments that were special or brought them joy. Pits are moments that made them frustrated, angry, or sad.
Discussion Question	Why do you think Mr. Creap was sending packages to Reese? What would you do if you were receiving the same packages? How would you feel?
Writing Activity	Write about the best package you have received or a package you would love to receive.
Title: The Piano Ghost	
Phonics Focus: Multisyllabic Words	

SEL Activity	Have students spend ten minutes stretching or doing yoga poses. If possible, play a video for students to follow. Another option is to model stretches or poses or to provide pictures that students can follow. Play calming music to create a peaceful environment.
Discussion Question	Have you ever heard a mysterious noise? How did you feel? What did you think the noise was?
Writing Activity	The campers were at a music camp where they learned to play instruments. Write about a camp that you would like to go to. What interests do you have that you would like to practice at the camp? What activities would you do?

Title: Who's Haunting Who?	
Phonics Focus: Prefixes/Roots/Suffixes	
SEL Activity	Have students think of a color that reminds them of relaxation and positive emotions. Then have them think of a color that makes them think of negative emotions such as anger or frustration. Have students close their eyes and practice deep breathing. Tell them to imagine inhaling the relaxing color and exhaling the negative color.
Discussion Question	Alice tried to scare the kids away from the cabin. If you believed the place where you were staying was haunted by ghosts, what would you do?
Writing Activity	Saanvi and Ethan were excited to be camping for the first time. Write about something you did for the first time. How did you feel? What did you like most about the experience? What did you like least?

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	Title:	The	Mysterious	Mr.	Platt	
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Phonics Focus: Closed Syllables/Complex Closed Syllables

SEL Activity	Have students use their five senses to connect with their environment. Ask students to silently identify five things they can see, four things they can hear, three things they can feel, two things they can smell, and one thing they can taste.
Discussion Question	A new neighbor moves in next door to Jen, and without knowing much about the neighbor, she assumes what the neighbor will be like. Was Jen correct in her assumption? Why or why not? What can happen if we form opinions about others without knowing them well?
Writing Activity	Kim wants to be a famous dancer, and Jen wants to be a detective one day. Write about a dream job you have. Why do you want to do this job? What can you do to help prepare for this job?

Title: Operation Robot Rescue		
Phonics Focus: Vowel-r Syllables		
SEL Activity	Have students make a list of people, places, things, or activities that bring them joy.	
Discussion Question	Harper, Morgan, and Arthur were on a robotics team. They had to work together to learn new information and build a robot for a competition. How does teamwork help to accomplish a task? What can make working with a team challenging?	
Writing Activity	Write about a competition you were a part of. Was it for a sport, a hobby, or something else? How did you prepare for the competition? How did you feel? Is there a sport or skill you would like to compete in one day?	

Title: School Play Sabotage

Phonics Focus: Complex Consonant Patterns

SEL Activity	Have students check in with their thoughts by journaling or drawing anything on their mind. These thoughts can be wonders, worries, concerns, excitements, or anything they are thinking about that day.
Discussion Question	Sophie wondered if someone was sabotaging the play. What does it mean to sabotage something? Why would someone do that? How would you feel if someone sabotaged something you were planning?
Writing Activity	Sophie couldn't find Gracia's costume before the play was about to begin. Write about a time you couldn't find something important that you needed. What couldn't you find? What did you do? How did you feel?

Title: The Secret Scroll			
Phonics Focus: Multisy	/llabic Words		
SEL Activity	Have students engage in a breathing activity. Turn off the lights and have students close their eyes and either sit on the floor or in a chair with both feet on the ground. Model breathing in for five counts and out for five counts. Repeat this breathing pattern for two to three minutes.		
Discussion Question	Amelia likes puzzle books, and Leo likes books with fun facts. What is your favorite kind of book? Why?		
Writing Activity	The library is Amelia's favorite place in the world. Write about your favorite place. What do you do there? What is it like? Why is it your favorite place?		
Title: The Thief in Room 103			
Phonics Focus: Long V	owels		
SEL Activity	 Describe the difference between a growth mindset and a fixed mindset. Then give students specific statements to reflect on. Ask them whether each statement represents a growth mindset or fixed mindset. Have students share the thoughts and feelings they have about each statement. Then ask students to journal about their own mindset for a few minutes. Examples: Fixed mindset: A new challenge is too hard. Growth mindset: A new challenge is an opportunity. Fixed mindset: I will never figure this out. Growth mindset: If I keep trying, I might learn a new way to solve this problem. Fixed mindset: I am only good at certain things. Growth mindset: If I keep trying new activities and hobbies, I might find more things I am good at and enjoy. 		
Discussion Question	The friends in this book admire one another's different interests. What are your interests? They could be sports, hobbies, activities, or anything that brings you joy. What interests do your friends have that you admire?		
Writing Activity	The students assumed that Rose had stolen the missing items. How can making assumptions about others without knowing them well be harmful? How would you feel if someone made an inaccurate assumption about you?		

Title: Museum Mayhem		
Phonics Focus: Vowel	Team Syllables	
SEL Activity	Distribute a sticky note to each student. Have students draw or write one thing that they are grateful for on the sticky note. Have students place all the sticky notes on a "gratitude wall" in the classroom.	
Discussion Question	The friends wanted to help solve the mystery of the missing jewel. Have you ever tried to solve a mystery? What actions did you take? Did you successfully solve the mystery? What do you think is the best way to approach solving a mystery?	
Writing Activity	The class took a field trip to a museum. Write about the coolest field trip you have been on or one you would like to take.	

Title: The Mysterious Moonlight Fair

Phonics Focus: Compound Words

SEL Activity	Guide students to relax their muscles. Tell them to tense one muscle, such as the left calf muscle, for five seconds and then slowly relax the muscle. Repeat this with the remaining major muscles in the body, moving upward until you reach the facial muscles.
Discussion Question	Joey's glasses and Lana's hearing aids are some of the many things that make each of these children unique. What is something that makes you unique?
Writing Activity	Joey and Lana threw pennies into the wishing well and made wishes. What is a dream or a wish you have? Write about it and why this dream or wish is important to you.

Title: The Alien Escape Room

Phonics Focus: Prefixes/Roots/Suffixes			
SEL Activity	 Offer one of the following SEL-focused prompts and have students journal, draw, or think of a response to the prompt. Examples: What is a strategy you use to calm down when you are upset? What is the best compliment you have ever received? Explain a time you overcame a fear. What is one quality about you that makes you unique? 		
Discussion Question	Each chapter begins with a project log. Who wrote the project logs? According to the logs, why did the alien need to start the ship quickly? How did the alien feel after the boys escaped?		
Writing Activity	Alex does push-ups to help him feel ready to tackle challenging tasks. Write about something you do to help you feel ready for a test, game, competition, or challenge.		

Title: Trouble at Hillside Hive		
Phonics Focus: Compo	ound Words	
SEL Activity	 Give students a prompt that evokes a positive emotion and have them draw for eight to ten minutes. Sample drawing prompts: Draw your happy place. Draw a person who is your hero. Draw your favorite activity. 	
Discussion Question	The bees in the colony all work together. Why is it important for everyone in a group, family, or team to work together? How does the bee colony ensure that everyone in the group is helping out?	
Writing Activity	This book explains the different roles of bees in a colony. If you were a bee, which type of bee would you be? Which job would you have in the bee colony? Why would you be good at that job? Write your thoughts.	

Title: Skunk Squad		
Phonics Focus: Vowel-r Syllables		
SEL Activity	Have students write a list of scents that make them feel relaxed (lavender, vanilla, rain, etc.). If possible, use an oil diffuser or candle with a calming scent in the room. Play soft music to create a peaceful environment.	
Discussion Question	Bernadette did not think the skunks were the right security team for the job. If you could create a team, which animals do you think would be good choices to help solve Bernadette's problem at the festival?	
Writing Activity	The skunks helped free a baby space whale from tangled ropes. Write about a time you helped somebody in need or a time somebody helped you.	

Title: Shadow's Quest

Phonics Focus: Multisyllabic Words

SEL Activity	Ring a bell or chime and have students listen mindfully to the ringing sound. Tell students to focus only on the ringing sound and not on any other sounds they hear or thoughts in their minds. Tell them to close their eyes and raise their hands once the sound is completely gone. Repeat this activity three to four times.
Discussion Question	Why did Shadow help his friend? What traits does Shadow have that make him a good friend? What traits do you have that make you a good friend? What is something you have done to help a friend?
Writing Activity	This story is written from the perspective of Shadow, who is a dog. Write a short story from the perspective of your favorite animal.

Title: The Unlikely Leader		
Phonics Focus: Closed Syllables/Complex Closed Syllables		
SEL Activity	Say a color and have students silently identify an object of that color in the room. For example, for yellow, a student might identify a pencil. Then have students silently identify a feeling or emotion that correlates with the color. For example, <i>"Yellow makes me feel happy."</i>	
Discussion Question	The humans are cutting down forest trees to build new homes. What are some positives about building a community of homes here? What are some negatives?	
Writing Activity	Choose to be either an animal living in the forest or a human planning to build a community of homes. If you are a forest animal, write a letter to the humans explaining why they shouldn't build the homes. If you are a human, write a letter to the forest animals explaining why you believe the homes are needed.	

Title: Frenemies Save the Library!

Phonics Focus: Prefixes/Roots/Suffixes

SEL Activity	Read a mindfulness book aloud. The website https://www.readbrightly.com/ mindfulness-meditation-books-for-kids/ lists books that can be read to early elementary school students. The website https://www.weareteachers. com/mindfulness-picture-books/ lists books that can be read to upper- elementary or middle school students.
Discussion Question	Mice and cats don't usually get along. Why did Catalog and Graff get along? How was their friendship useful for the library? How was it useful for each other?
Writing Activity	Catalog had a dream to learn to write. He worked hard and never gave up. Write about something you have worked hard to learn or achieve.

Title: Undercover Iguana

Phonics Focus: Vowel Team Syllables

SEL Activity	Have students journal or draw about a time they overcame a fear or about a fear they currently have and the steps they are taking to overcome it.
Discussion Question	Do you think Ollie made the right choice to stay a teacher at the school? Or should he have joined his iguana friends down by the river? Why?
Writing Activity	Write about how Ollie changed throughout the book. Think about Ollie's feelings and actions and how they are different at the beginning, middle, and end of the book.

Title: Briggs vs. the Squirrels		
Phonics Focus: Complex Consonant Patterns		
SEL Activity	Guide students through a body scan. Tell students to lie on the floor and close their eyes. Tell them to think about their feet and notice any feelings in the different parts of their feet. Then have them move upward through the body until they reach their facial muscles.	
Discussion Question	What are some words you would use to describe Briggs, the rabbits, and the squirrels? Explain why you chose those words.	
Writing Activity	Briggs created a plan to catch the squirrels who were stealing his food. Write about a time you created a plan to help solve a problem.	
Title: The Golden Box		
Phonics Focus: Long Vowels		
SEL Activity	Have students lie down and practice deep breathing by putting a light object or their hand on their stomach. Have students focus on the object or their hand as they deeply breathe in and out. Have them force the air toward their stomach to move the object as they breathe.	

	their stomach to move the object as they breathe.
Discussion Question	Who do you think put the camera in the golden box and why?
Writing Activity	Write about a time when you found an item that was unexpected or interesting. What did you do with the object?

Small-Group Activities

Paired Reading

Pair students by ability levels. Assign chunks of text to each student in the pair. Have students read their chunk aloud to their partner. Encourage students to work together to decode challenging words or understand difficult concepts.

Modeled Reading

To demonstrate fluent reading, read aloud a chapter or book. Stop periodically to draw attention to the expression, volume, tone, and intonation that you are using while reading. To encourage students' active listening, engage them with questions such as, *Listen to how I read this dialogue between the friends. How does my voice change when I read what each person is saying*?

Small-Group Reading

Group students by ability levels. Assign chunks of text to each student in the group. If necessary to promote confidence, have students silently read their chunks or the entire section of text ahead of time. Encourage students to work together to decode challenging words or understand difficult concepts.

Reader's Theater

Use scenes from a book or find a scripted play at the students' reading level. Assign a reading role to each student and have students practice their scenes. Engage in a Reader's Theater and have students role-play their characters in a small group. Encourage students to use expression while reading their lines.

Book Club

Have students individually read the same section of a book. Then have them discuss the book in a small group. Assign each student a discussion question to ask the group, and encourage students to share their own thoughts, feelings, and ideas about what they read. (Sample discussion questions are listed below.)

Reading with Expression

Write dialogue from books on strips of paper. Distribute the strips to partners or small groups. Have students practice reading the dialogue strips with expression.

Write a Story

Show an image or an object from the classroom. Have students write a story about it. Students can share their stories within a small group.

Family Reading Discussion

Send students home with discussion questions for a book that they have read in class or invite family members into the classroom. Have students read the book again with family members and invite them to discuss the book. (Sample discussion questions are listed below.)

Research a Topic at Home

Have students choose a topic of interest and ask family members to help them research the topic at home using the internet or books. Have students write a report about the topic and share it with a small group at school.

Library Visit

Encourage students to visit the local library and choose a book to read at home. Have students share their thoughts about the book with a small group at school. They can use discussion questions or simply share a summary of the book and whether they liked or didn't like it. (Sample discussion questions are listed below.)

Audiobooks

Play an audiobook for students and have them follow along in the book. Then give a list of comprehension or discussion questions about the book to students to talk about in small groups.

Punctuation Challenge

On strips of paper, write the same sentence two or more times, but leave off the punctuation. Distribute the strips to small groups. Have students place different punctuation in each sentence and practice reading the sentence in different ways. For example, *My dog is silly. My dog is silly! My dog is silly?*

Phonics Focus Fluency Practice

Write words with a phonics focus that students are learning about (for example, multisyllabic words or vowel-r syllables) on note cards. Pass out note cards to pairs of students and have them practice reading the words together.

Finish the Story

Start by giving students a story prompt. Then have them write the rest of the story in pairs or small groups. An example of a story prompt is, *Once upon a time, there was a wicked witch who*...

Poetry Jam

Have students write their own poems. Then ask students to read their poems to the class or a small group. Invite family members or caregivers to listen to the Poetry Jam.

Reading Buddies

Allow students to bring a favorite stuffed animal to school to read to. Have students quietly read aloud a book to their reading buddy each day.

Parent Reading

Have parent volunteers join the class during reading time. Have students sit with parents and read books aloud together.

Sample discussion questions:

- How did this book make you feel? Did your feelings change while reading this book?
- If you could meet the author, what questions would you ask about this book?
- Imagine you were able to change the ending of the book. What would you write instead?
- Which character in the book do you relate to most? Why? Which character do you relate to least? Why?

Phonics Activities

Closed Syllables/Complex Closed Syllables

Distribute whiteboards and markers or paper and pencils to students. Say one of the following twosyllable words aloud: *open, inside, display, robot, ringlet, window, reject, hotel.* Have students write the word, separate the word by its syllables by drawing a line, and then circle the closed syllable. Have students say the short vowel sound in the closed syllable aloud. Repeat with the remaining words.



Books with a phonics focus of closed syllables/complex closed syllables: *Restless Fossil, The Mysterious Mr. Platt, The Unlikely Leader*

Vowel-r Syllables

The letter pairs *er*, *ir*, and *ur* all stand for the /er/ sound. Have students identify three words, each with one of these vowel-r syllables, in the books. Then have students write the words in their own sentences.



Books with a phonics focus of vowel-r syllables: Message in the Dirt, Operation Robot, Skunk Squad

Complex Consonant Patterns

Make a four-column table with the following headings: *ch, sh, th, wh*. Have students think of words that have these complex consonant patterns at the beginning, middle, or end of the word and write them in the table.



Books with a phonics focus of complex consonant patterns: The Clockwork Curse, School Play Sabotage, Briggs vs. the Squirrels

Compound Words

Write the following words on note cards: *night, day, light, sun, hand, set, some, any, one, time, thing.* Have students put the cards together side by side to create compound words. For each compound word they make, have students write it in a sentence. As a challenge, have students think of compound words they know and identify the two words each one contains (examples: *campsite* contains *camp* and *site, flashlight* contains *flash* and *light*, chalkboard contains chalk and board).



Books with a phonics focus of compound words: The Haunting of Cabin 13, The Mysterious Moonlight Fair, Trouble at Hillside Hive

Long Vowels

Say the following words aloud: *state, chat, theme, speck, shine, tick, rope, stop, cute, tub.* Have students write out each word and then give a thumbs-up if it has a long vowel sound or a thumbs-down if it does not.



Books with a phonics focus of long vowels: The Book of Riddles, The Thief in Room 103, The Golden Box

Vowel Team Syllables

Have students read two or three pages from one book and search for words with vowel teams. Have students choose a vowel team word and draw a picture that represents the word. For example, draw a haunted house to represent the word *haunted*.



Books with a phonics focus of vowel team syllables: Haunted Deliveries, Museum Mayhem, Undercover Iguana

Multisyllabic Words

Put the students into two groups. Have one volunteer from each group meet at the board. Read one of the following words aloud: *security, anyone, ghost, director, scramble, song, camper, stage, family, finish.* Have the students race to write the number of syllables in the word. The first student to answer correctly "wins" that turn. Repeat with new pairs of students and the rest of the words. If needed, use more words from the books to continue the game with new pairs of students. Keep a tally of correct answers to determine which team wins the game.



Books with a phonics focus of multisyllabic words: The Piano Ghost, The Secret Scroll, Shadow's Quest

Prefixes/Roots/Suffixes

Distribute whiteboards and markers or paper and pencils to students. Write a verb such as *play* on the board. Have students write the word *play* with as many prefixes and suffixes as possible (for example, *played*, *replay*, *overplaying*, *player*). Have students use or write each word in a sentence. Repeat with other verbs such as *love*, *do*, and *act*.



Books with a phonics focus of prefixes/roots/suffixes: Who's Haunting Who?, The Alien Escape Room, Frenemies Save the Library!